
**Natural Resources, Ecology &
Parks Committee**

HB 1832

Brief Description: Requiring the posting of cougar interactions with pets, livestock, or humans.

Sponsors: Representatives Kretz, Blake, Grant, Holmquist, P. Sullivan, Buri, B. Sullivan, Kristiansen, Serben, Linville, McCune, Orcutt, Sump, Condotta, Cox, Walsh, Clements, Roach, Newhouse, Haler and Pearson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to post the known details of all reported interactions between cougars and humans, pets, and livestock onto their internet website.

Hearing Date: 2/22/05

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

Generally, the use of dogs to hunt or pursue cougars is unlawful in Washington. However, there are situations where the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) is authorized to allow the use of dogs to hunt cougars. One such situation is when the Commission determines that there is a public safety need [RCW 77.15.245].

The use of dogs to hunt cougars when there is a public safety need must be limited to specific game management units, and may only be allowed after the Commission has determined that there is no practical alternative to the use of dogs (RCW 77.15.245). Practical alternatives include seasons for hunting cougars without the aid of dogs, public education, cougar depredation permits, and relocation or euthanasia programs administered by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) [WAC 232-12-243].

The Commission may authorize the use of dogs in a public safety cougar removal efforts if the WDFW believes, based on complaints or observation, that eleven interactions occurred between humans and cougars in a given year. Of those eleven confirmed interactions, at least four must have resulted in incidents where livestock or pets were killed or injured by the cougar [WAC 232-12-243].

If the necessary interactions occur, and no practical alternatives exist, the WDFW may allow for the use of dogs to take one cougar per 120 square kilometers in rural or undeveloped areas, or one cougar per 430 square kilometers in urban or suburban areas. All public safety cougar removals must occur between December 1st and March 15th in most game management areas [WAC 232-12-243].

Summary of Bill:

The WDFW must post the known details of all reported interactions between cougars and humans, pets, and livestock onto their internet website. The postings must contain the location and time of the incidents, as well as any known details when livestock are involved.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.